Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass so fresh and sweet;
For song of bird and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear and see,
Father in Heaven, we thank Thee!

-- *Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

Volume VIII April, 1957 Number 2

OUR PURPOSE

"To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 E. 29th Street New York 16, N. Y.

Volume VIII April, 1957 Number 2

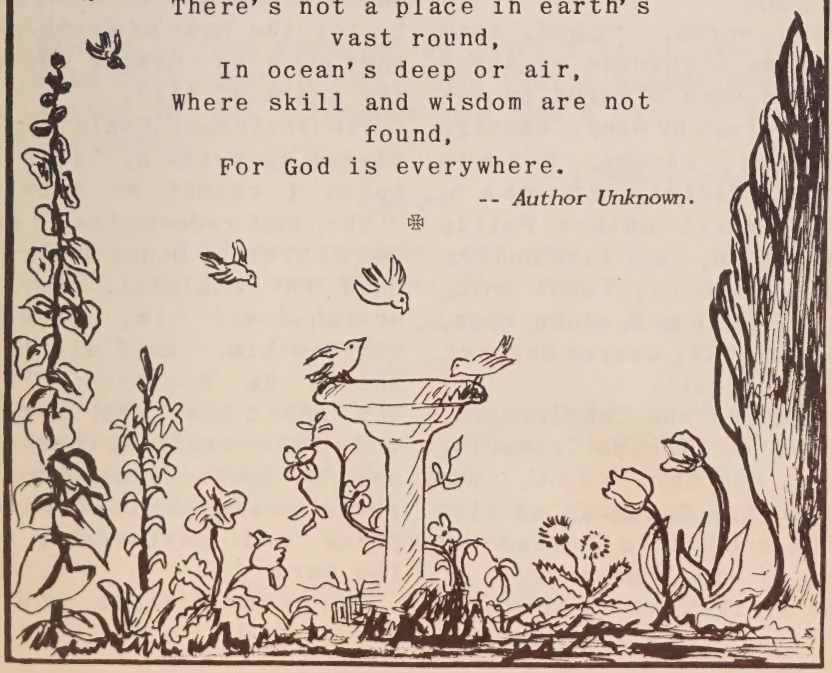
God's Wisdom and Power

There's not a tint that paints
the rose,
Or decks the lily fair,
Or streaks the simplest flower
that blows,
But God has placed it there.

There's not a grass, a single
blade
Or tree of loveliest green,
Where heavenly skill is not
displayed
And heavenly wisdom seen.

There's not a place in earth's
vast round,
In ocean's deep or air,
Where skill and wisdom are not
found,
For God is everywhere.

-- *Author Unknown.*



A LENTEN MESSAGE

By W. J. Thompson, D.D.

A MEMORABLE CRY FROM THE CROSS!

"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"
(Luke 23 Chapter, 46 verse).

There is wonderful history connected with these words. According to Luke's Gospel these were our Lord's last words while on the Cross of Calvary: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

All through the centuries these words have fascinated many men and women, especially when called to face tragic circumstances. In the New Testament we have the cry of Stephen the martyr - "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." (Acts 7:59).

These words, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" have been uttered in extreme crises by many; namely, John Hus, Jerome, Bishop Nicholas Ridley, Thomas a, Becket, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Lady Jane Dudley, Count Egmont, Count Horn, George Wishart, John Knox, Bishop Jewell, George Herbert, Donald Cargill.

We may include Charlemagne, Charles V. Thomas Cromwell, Robert Southey, poet, and Christopher Columbus as also having used this message at times of their passing.

The striking thing about the use of this wonderful statement is that Catholic and Protestant, King and Commoner, old and young, men, women and youth — all have turned to these words amid the crises of life and death, to express their complete trust in Divine support.

The supreme significance of these words is found in our Lord and Saviour who cried while hanging on the Cross: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."
These words are meant not only for the hour of death, but they are also a prayer for all the years of life.

The writer of Psalm 31 declared in verse 5, "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit." "Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth." Dangers threatened the Psalmist. Sorrows overshadowed him; problems baffled him. Amid all these things he declared: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit." And in the thrilling consciousness of Divine Protection he found peace, and power and poise and partnership with the Lord!

The man without God is

caught in the net of a blind chance. Life to him is just a meaningless riddle, confused and chaotic! He knows not how soon he may turn some corner in existence and come face to face with disaster and death!

But the man who trusts in God can face each day, and any experience, with calmness, courage and confidence, as he prays:

"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

No matter who you are, or what you face, take these words as your own from this moment, and you will have serenity and security forever!

"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Into Thy hands, O Lord, I yield my life,
And so find guidance through all change and strife!

Into Thy hands - how good it is to know
God will support me wherever I go!

Into Thy hands! The best is yet to be —
I face the future gladly - safe with Thee!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT—

"Prayer is that exercise by which I bring myself into such communion with God that I become possessed of God's thought and God's passion for the world."

-- a Chinese scholar.

"Flowers whisper the message that words fail to express."

(Sent by Mrs. Frank W. Lovejoy).

"Every morning lean thine arms upon the window sill of heaven and gaze upon thy Lord, then with this image in thy heart, turn strong to meet thy day."

-- *Author Unknown.*

"Joy cannot be possessed
Until it is expressed."

PRAYER AND IMMORTALITY

By Roy Wallace Thomas

[*Editor's note:*

Do you find your thought in conflict with that of the university post-graduate student who brought his ten-page thesis to Roy Wallace Thomas for review? His thesis sought to prove "immortality of influence" as the ONLY immortality, denying survival beyond the grave. Do you meet this same denial in theological and academic discussion in YOUR area? Dr. Thomas has been called upon to give two sermons on IMMORTALITY recently.]

The word "immortality" has two meanings in current usage. To a minority of people it means merely "social immortality", "impersonal immortality" or the "immortality of influence". To the majority of people it means life after death, the eternal survival of the individual beyond the grave.

A Gallup survey reported that seventy-five per cent of American citizens believe in life after death. While a problem like "immortality" is not one to be decided by popular vote, that survey reveals that there is much good sense at the heart of the American people.

Scholars tell us that the notion of life after death was foreign to ancient Israel, and grew up gradually in post-exilic Judaism, leaving but few traces in the Old Testament which confines life to this life, and at best is dim concerning survival beyond the grave.

The New Testament, on the contrary, is positive in its conviction of the reality of life after death and reaches a climax in the faith that we are "to be away from the body and at home with the Lord"—*(2 Corinthians 5:8, RSV)*. The faith of the early Christians in survival after death was positive and vivid.

Today the interest in death and life beyond seems less than that which characterized previous generations. We are told that in many churches death and immortality are seldom mentioned. The reasons vary. People are wrapped up in the good living of the present times. Many rebel against the notions of the "hymnbook heaven", making the mistake of interpreting poetry literally, including the poetry in the Bible. There is irritation against the dogmatism which insists that only its formulations regarding the future life, may be accepted.

or else one is damned.

The energies of those who try to explore the so-called phenomena of "extrasensory perception" produce results both barren and negative, neither proving nor disproving the reality of survival. Dr. Gardner Murphy, the famous psychologist, concludes a recent study of "psychical research" with the conviction: "Today the case for communication with the dead is neither proved nor disproved." (*THIS WEEK magazine*, March 3, 1957).

NEWSWEEK, January 28, 1957, reported that the London's *SUNDAY TIMES* asked Bertrand Russell (aged 84), "Do men survive death?" He resounded, "No. The belief that we survive death seems to me," he said, "to have no scientific basis." Readers of *NEWSWEEK* were quick to reply, "No scientist or philosopher has disproved survival after death."

After facing candidly all the objections of honest doubt, it is still possible for us to emerge with valid grounds for hope concerning the future life. We do well when we agree with the statement of Benjamin Franklin, written a few weeks before his death at the age of eighty-four, in answer to a question from the President of Yale regarding Franklin's religious attitude: "I believe....that the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this." He added that he had no doubt of the continuance of his life beyond death.

We need not shrink from Emerson's challenge: "I notice that as soon as writers broach this subject, they begin to quote. Tell me what *YOU* know." What do we know?

THIS WE KNOW:

1. The future abode or heaven, by whatever name you prefer, is, in the words of Hamlet—

"The undiscover'd country
from whose bourn
No traveler returns" (III: 1)

2. If death were the end of Jesus, if death were to be the end of all people who have shaped their lives in the pattern of Christ's goodness, then God and his universe are without meaning.

3. If the grave were to be the end, if life's hopes were never to be fulfilled, if the cruelties of life were never to be corrected and its hurts never healed, if the myriads upon myriads of human beings who have lived and died in misery were never to meet with justice, then God and his universe are cruel.

But before we discuss this

further let us consider the eventual fate of the "immortality of influence". It may be good while it lasts but its end is fated. For this also we know: It is the verdict of science that conditions for life upon our planet are temporary at best. Astronomers tell us that the earth, once uninhabitable, will eventually become uninhabitable again. They contend that however life may end, the eventual end of life and history upon the earth is certain. The requisite cosmic processes are at work. With the end of history, the "immortality of influence" comes to an end, despite its temporary worth. Magnify the value of the "immortality of influence" all you wish; you will find that the total length of it in terms of astronomical time cannot exceed a few moments. Thus, immortality can only depend upon survival.

If death were to be the end, and life to disappear from our solar system, what would be the meaning of it all? With nothing left, with the elimination of value and purpose, the result in the words of Fosdick would be "a senseless creation which in the end consummates nothing, wastes everything, preserves no values, fulfills no promises, has no meaning. My faith in immortality has been mainly a corollary from my faith that creation cannot be so utterly senseless and irrational" *(Autobiography, p. 241)*.

Worse, still, is the injustice and cruelty of it all. The joys of the few will not by any means compensate for the unrequited pain, misery, and poverty of the billions of human creatures who never had opportunity to rise above meager, bare, animal existence. At this moment half of the population of the world is inadequately housed and nourished, and has no medical aid or cultural opportunity. Myriads die as their ancestors died, without apparent hope. If God and his total universe, visible and invisible, physical and spiritual, temporal and eternal, provide no correction for these injustices, incompletions and brutal effects, then, I repeat, God is heartless and cruel.

In this dilemma man has two divine gifts adequate in their help; namely, reason and faith. *REASON* tells us that opportunity should be given beyond death for every being mistreated in this life to find cure, completion and fulfillment. *FAITH*, unshaken in its belief in the goodness of God, holds that his goodness pledges him to correct, in ultimate survival, all of the criminal

defects of the universe of nature and of life.

Death of itself cannot be a cure. Death merely opens the door to continued opportunity. Cure and completion can come only through creative cooperation between the human agent and the Divine Agent. The way is by the grace of God working in moral effort. Moral effort is man functioning as a true son of God. Man, the offspring of God, is completed and fulfilled only as he learns to use his God-given freedom. The goodness of God requires that man shall be given full opportunity to fulfill his divine destiny. For this the finite world is not enough. God's plan and purpose will keep man busy throughout eternity.

It is the faith of high religion that future survival is more than mere existence. This survival is eternal <u>life</u>—existence infused by the quality of God. To be a fulfilled child of God in any world, in any phase of existence, present or future, is to be in full accord with him. This accord in biology is called "adjustment to the environment," the condition of physical life. Since God is the main factor in man's total environment, accord with or adjustment to the source of life is called, in the Gospels, <u>repentance</u> and trust.

The cost of spiritual life is the sacrifice of selfishness, the crucifixion of evil in the heart. The most deadly form of evil is rebellion against God. Sin will destroy life in any phase of existence. The only cure is repentance, which every man must do for himself. No man can repent for another. The way to life, eternally, is to be right with God.

A young university graduate wrote me rightly dubbing as a "lament" the pessimistic wail of a certain theologian who said, "The glow of life is always a sunset glow." In these words a philosophic Zeus nods. If he were fully aware, he would know that the true glow of life is always a dawn. Sounder than his mood was the radiant attitude of Charles Kingsley, whose faith was so vivid that he confessed he could hardly wait to see what lies beyond the grave.

It is not that life beyond death is an improper field for research. The fact is that man has no adequate organ or instrument for penetrating beyond the grave. But can we not confidently leave the future to God? In the meantime, let us live in the <u>eternal</u> <u>now</u>. We have no symbols adequate for comprehending eternity. Eternity is not something added to time. It is more than "endless duration," for you

cannot measure eternity by the units of time. To speak crudely, in our present phase of existence, space and time are superimposed upon eternity. As R. J. Campbell worded it, "Time is eternity under the aspect of becoming." Time and space are passing phases of the visible world. Eternity is the constant of the invisible world. Death lifts the curtain of time and space and sense giving the consciousness of the freed soul unclouded vision of timeless, spaceless reality which we know as the eternal now, through commitment to the good God of Jesus Christ.

Full accord with God is the basic condition for life now and forever and prayer as commitment is of eternal worth. Prayer as commitment to God is experience of eternal life now. The man who gives himself to the care of God has nothing to fear, from others, from disease or from atomic blast.

Since the invisible world is too wonderful for eye and ear to sense, we may rest our research in reassurance with the fervent faith of Guido Reni:

"Above earth's best is heaven's better still."

oooOooo

Somewhere, in some little spot—or a big one—plant some flower seeds this Spring. Then as Summer ripens, watch God's miracles unfold—and see if you can ever doubt again!

THE SHEPHERD

Shepherd of Souls, whene'er we rove
From out the precincts of Thy love,
Recall unto our wayward hearts
The joy and peace Thy fold imparts;
Help us to heed Thy voice and come
In from the night, and be at home.

As in a wheel with buckled rim
Held in the hub the spokes are trim,
So may we disappear in Thee
Only to share Thy radiancy;
At the discordant fringe be calm
Sharing the Center's rhythmic psalm.

O Thou, Who on the Emmaus Road
Lifted the lorn disciples' load,
Took from their hearts the chilling fear,
Transmuted by Thy presence near,
Bring us from out the gathering gloom
To sup with Thee in the Upper Room.

The fatted calf we do not crave,
Only Thy strength and joy to have;
Not the rich robe, the royal bed,
Only Thyself, the Wine, the Bread;
Then, when we loose our earthly bands —
Thy strong and never-failing hands.

-- *A. E. Johnson.*

WHAT EASTER MEANS TO ME

By Harry Halsey Starrett

Of all the festive and hallowed occasions which we celebrate during the year, Easter is, to me, the most significant because the cross is the symbol of all the Christian Virtues — love, compassion, humility, forbearance, selflessness, sacrifice, gentleness, kindness, loyalty, justice, mercy, endurance, faith, fortitude and forgiveness.

In listing these Virtues, I put Love first and Forgiveness last because Love is the Mother of all the other Christian Virtues and Forgiveness marked the culmination of Christ's tragic experience which ended with His crucifixion on Calvary's Cross, when the Master, hanging upon the cross and out of His great agony, uttered those powerful, sublime, tremendously significant and immortal words, to those who had nailed Him to the cross— "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Love is the greatest power in the universe; Love is the Divine Essence out of which all things were made; Love is the Heart of God's intelligent, just, irrevocable and eternal plan; Love is the only power which can overcome hate; Love is the only power which can redeem man, bring salvation to the world and make "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men" a glorious REALITY. It is only by the alchemy of Divine Love that hate is transmuted into Love; that evil is transmuted into GOOD; that error is transmuted into TRUTH; that illusion is transmuted into REALITY; that the temporal is transmuted into the ETERNAL; that mortality is transmuted into IMMORTALITY; that death is transmuted into Life Everlasting. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish but have ever-lasting life." "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Perfect Love casteth out fear." "Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you and pray for them which despitefully use you." "Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

If I have not learned well all these lessons of the cross; if I am not, willingly and

cheerfully and faithfully, bearing my cross for Christ as He bore His cross for me; if I am not, with bleeding feet, walking in His footsteps, on the path to fulfillment; if I am not willingly and joyfully wearing a crown of thorns, that I may earn and wear "The Crown of Glory" and "enter into the joy of my Lord;" if I cannot say to those who persecute and revile me, what Christ said to the mob who crucified Him— "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do", then, verily, I am not worthy to be called a Christian. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." These are the words of the Master and herein we find the answer to the question— What does it mean to be a Christian?

May the Angel of Truth roll away the stone of ignorance, which seals me in the Tomb of darkness—death—that I may be resurrected from the dead—the darkness of ignorance—and, in the Light of Understanding, ascend into heaven and into Life Everlasting—man's natural, fundamental and highest estate—and as I am lifted up, may I say with Christ— "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!" To me, this is the highest purpose and the highest attainment of life.

oooOooo

WIDE WALLS

Give me wide walls to
build my house of Life—
The North shall be of Love,
against the winds of fate;
The South of Tolerance,
that I may outreach hate;
The East of Faith, that rises
clear and new each day;
The West of Hope, that e'en
dies a glorious way,
The Threshold 'neath my
feet shall be Humility
The Roof - the very sky
itself - Infinity.
Give me wide walls to
build my house of Life.

oooOooo

-- *Author Unknown*

Easter

That spells Victory!

At sunset on the first Good Friday things looked dark for Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and for the other Mary, and for the women who watched by the Cross. Generally the disciples had scattered, hopes dashed, hearts bleeding, leaderless and lone. The central Cross was empty, and its victim, pierced with His five wounds, lay on a cold slab in Joseph's tomb, a ponderous stone rolled against the door. The priestly hierarchy had won its case, and Roman soldiers had carried out Pilate's sentence with hammer, nails, and spears. All was quiet on the northwestern front of Jerusalem. God was defeated,— so it seemed.

But God always has the last word; and Easter dawn changed disaster and defeat into the world's most decisive victory. Christ had "abolished death", (by removing its sting) and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel", says St. Paul. Our Lord Jesus Christ pushed back that boulder at the tomb's mouth and appeared in resurrection glory. He is still the Christus Victor, the conqueror of death, and brings solace and promise to those who "have loved long since, and lost awhile". The rose of hope blooms on every Christian's grave. Thus we, too, become "more than conquerors through Him that loved us".

There is a legend of Theseus and the Minotaur on the Island of Crete to whom the ancient city of Athens paid an annual tribute of seven youths and seven maidens whom he devoured. Year after year the ship carrying this human tribute-offering, a kind of "floating coffin", sailed from Piraeus, the port of Athens, into the sunset. As a symbol of the fate that awaited those hapless youths, the ship carried a black flag. Then in after years, young Theseus rose and begged his father's permission to join the next contingent of youths and try his trusty sword on the monster. At long last Theseus and his party sailed away, and along with the customary black flag, he carried a white flag to hoist in case he succeeded in slaying the dreaded beast, half man, half bull.

Days and weeks passed, but no sign of the returning ship. The ground observer corps of that day almost gave up its vigil when someone with eagle vision espied a spar on the horizon. In due course the out-

line of the hull appeared, and, lo, the white flag of victory flying at its masthead!

On Good Friday Evening our crucified Saviour sailed into the sunset bound for the lair of mankind's "last enemy", Death; and three days later He came back to the garden at Easter Dawn carrying the white flag of hope and victory. He has "overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers".

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

-- *Olin McKendree Jones.*

THE WAY, THE TRUTH, THE LIFE

"I am the way," was Jesus' claim,
And words and deeds have given
The pathway marked by his own name
To lead us into heaven.

"I am the truth," the Master said,
But lawless men defied him
And on a cruel cross he bled
As there they crucified him.

"I am the life," the Christ had said;
"Henceforward whosoever
" Believes in me, though he were dead,
"Yet shall he live forever!"

To blaze the way, from death he rose,
Retaliation scorning,
But making friends of countless foes
Since that first Easter morning.

Christ is the way, the truth, the life!
He changes men's behavior
As still in scenes where sin is rife
He rises as our Saviour!

-- *Ralph S. Thorn.*

* * *

MEDITATION AS ONE OF THE HIGHWAYS TO GOD

By Edward J. Allsop

(Contd. from February issue).

I suggest that before you actually start meditating you say any prayers you may wish to say, so as to keep the mind free when you start your meditations.

If you have any problems just lay them before God. We can ask for guidance for ourselves or our friends. If we are in difficulty mentally or materially, just address Him as a very dear intimate friend who is seated with you. You can tell him freely without reservation. He understands our weakness and our difficulties as no human friend can. He helps us. He never punishes us - it is our actions which punish us.

You will find in Matthew 21, Verse 22, the following:

"all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Note there is a definite promise - there are no limitations.

The answer to our difficulties always comes, but not always immediately or in the way we expect it. When confronted with a problem in which you do not know the answer, if at all possible, do nothing until you can see clearly the right thing to do. We often worry and fret about things that do not matter; we do not realize that we have all eternity in front of us.

How can we control our thoughts? Having planned out our time, we either sit or kneel in the place selected; it may help us if we say a prayer something like this:

"Infinite Spirit, all-loving, all-wise Father, I would draw very close to Thee at this hour. I would become more conscious of the harmony and beauty of Thy Life. In the quiet of my soul, Father, let me feel the inflow of Thy Love, Thy Strength, Thy Peace."

We then relax our body; it is no use sitting or kneeling with the body in a tense condition.

The next thing to do is to slow down our breathing. The reason for this is that there is a deep connection between breathing and thinking.

The effect of this will be a quiet relaxed mood, a calming of the constant vibration of thought. It restores a harmonious rhythm to us; it can transfer worry to peace when we have learned to attain this relaxed and peaceful state in our moments of meditation.

We can use it at any time during the day if our self-control is threatened by violent passion or disturbing emotions of any kind. Immediately resort to this exercise until the danger is passed.

Its effect under such conditions will be found to be quite remarkable.

During meditation, when unwanted thoughts come into your mind, do not concentrate on keeping them out. Deal with them if you can; if not, do not worry about them. Just turn them out and come quietly back to your breathing. It may help to say mentally, "I breathe in God's Love", and when you breathe out, say, "I breathe out God's Love to all men."

This in-breathing will cause spiritual light to enter you which will affect your whole being.

A good thing to help concentration is to read a short piece from the Bible — The Lord's Prayer, "Our Father" (contemplate every aspect of the Father), "Which art in Heaven" (What do we mean by Heaven?); The Twenty-third Psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd", "He restoreth my soul".

Concentrate as you read; mentally say over the passage selected very slowly, letting each word sink into your consciousness so that you actually become the author, the creator as it were.

Others find it a help to imagine they see a peaceful garden or landscape; they see a path leading up the mountainside to a temple on the hilltop. In their mind's eye they go up to the temple and they enter in the stillness within.

It is the temple of silence we have to find. There we find God. This silence is difficult to express in words.

To make meditation a Highway to God is to think over all His various aspects and manifestations. To meditate on Him is to put aside all thoughts and desires, to let our heart's love and devotion flow out to Him as to a beloved personal friend, and as we do this we are surrounded in His love.

When we have thus opened our hearts and minds to Him in true worship, we will experience an inflow of a definite return current, which will appease our spiritual hunger and satisfy every enquiry of our minds and give us that peace which no other can give.

In our lives we must find the golden mean; we must dwell awhile in mental quiet each day, without losing the capacity for practical work; we must put a proper balance upon the mystical and material element of our nature.

The Monk who makes his medi-

tation an obsession is free to do so, but we who have to live and work in the world must seek a wise balance. The light found during our practice of mental quiet will shine through our actions when we go out to mingle freely with the crowd.

When we have found the presence of God, we realize His unfailing goodness to us, we see how much we depend on Him for everything necessary for the fulfillment of our lives.

It is when we really know this that we have to be careful. If we sit on the mountain top feeling His Love and Power and confine it to ourselves, we are utterly lost.

What we have learned in our quiet times, we must share with others in our daily lives; we have to learn to let His Light shine through us to others.

Like so many things in this life, we have to give them away before we can have any benefit to ourselves; the more we give, the more we receive.

One last word - you cannot find peace through reading any book; no one can give it to you, no one can teach you - the only way to find it is to seek it. "Seek and ye shall find." As you sit quietly, He comes as quietly as the sun rises in the morning and fills you with His Light.

oooOooo

GOD IS MY GUIDE. I ENTRUST THE ENTIRE ADMINISTRATION OF MY AFFAIRS TO HIM.

I turn to God in quiet meditation and prayer before I begin my day. What I do and think are of first importance to the final outcome of good that I want to bring forth in my affairs.

In prayer, I let go of any anxious thoughts or worry about details and entrust the entire administration of my affairs to God. I give thanks that His wisdom moves and directs all that concerns me.

God guides me in all that I do and say. He guides me in my thoughts of others, and through Him I give them a blessing.

Everything works together in perfect order and harmony when I trust God to take care of me and all that concerns me.

I think about my life and affairs with a peaceful and thankful heart. I know that because I have entrusted the entire administration of my affairs to Him only good and happy results can be forthcoming. *(sent by Rev. F. J. Compson).*

WALK WITH ME

Thou art watching in the sky,
Past the white clouds sailing by,
Christ of Mercy, Lord Most High!
As You watch o'er land or sea,
Watch o'er me.

Thou art walking by the streams
Where the water, rippling, gleams;
Ah, how sweet Thy Presence seems!
As by those in Galilee,
Walk by me.

Thou art working in the hills
Where the winter snow distills
Into tumbling mountain rills.
As You work in flower and tree,
Work in me.

Thou art waiting in the heart
Till the soul with sudden start
Leaps to claim that better part.
As I answer, Lord, to Thee,
Wait for me.

Watcher o'er the Universe,
Walking, working in the earth,
Waiting for our Second Birth,
As with joy Thy love I see,
Walk with me.

-- *Alvin A. Jones*

HE IS ALIVE!

By Catherine Marshall

[Editor's note—

This article, especially written for us, appeared in June, 1952. We have had so many calls for it that we are repeating it here, as it is now out of print.]

Can God really bring good out of evil? On that May afternoon, as I lay, sobbing across the bed, I could not have been sure of the answer. I had just received the doctor's solemn verdict, and the future looked black—all black. I could not foresee that out of the three years of illness to follow would emerge the greatest blessing of my life. Yes, God can and does - when we let him - bring good out of the very worst that can happen to us.

The central figure in my story is not me or the members of my family—but Christ. I suppose if anyone had asked me, nine years ago, if I knew Christ personally, I would have been grossly insulted, and would have answered a most vehement, "Yes, of course." I knew Him intellectually. I knew what the New Testament said about Him, the events of His life. I had read what many, many writers had said about Him. But I didn't know Him as a Person in the way that I know my earthly friends. That seems a strange thing for a woman to say who is a minister's daughter, a minister's wife, and has been a leader in church work since teen-age days, but I know now that it is true.

You see, the fact that we cannot see Christ with our eyes or touch Him with our hands really makes no difference. Of course, our walk is by faith—; if we had sight, we would have no need of faith. I can imagine that if I were completely blind, but lived in the same house with a friend day after day, even though I never touched or saw the friend, I would still learn to know him. I would learn to recognize the attributes of his personality. In just the same way we can know Christ. Nor do we have to be mystics or crack-pots or queer. So, I should like to put down some of the things I learned about Christ when I met Him as a Person—a Friend.

I learned that He is alive, gloriously alive in the present. He has a vivid personality—more vivid than any other human being I have ever met.

I first met Christ on the night of September 14, 1944,

about three o'clock in the morning, while visiting my father and mother, when out of the very depths of discouragement about my illness, my lack of progress, and the seeming inability of the doctors to help me, I finally turned myself, my health, my whole future over to Christ for better or for worse. At the time I thought it was for worse. That relinquishment seemed to unlock the very gates of Heaven, and that night I had an experience that was for me, in my small way, what Paul's vision on the road to Damascus was for him.

In two minutes that night, as Christ stood by the right-hand side of my bed and told me that everything was all right, I learned more about Him than I could have learned by reading a thousand books.

I learned that He is a curious combination of loving tenderness (the sort of love that a father has for his child) and of kingliness—what the New Testament means when it talks of "His speaking with authority".

I learned that He uses the light touch with His children—that He has a sense of humor. You have known doctors who use the light touch, who joke with their patients and sometimes do it rather crudely. Christ uses it with the final touch of graciousness and finesse. Remember how Christ was always saying to people, "Be of good cheer" or, in other words, "Cheer up". It is as if He smiles upon us in any difficult situation and says: "It isn't really as bad as you think. There's nothing wrong that I can't fix. Everything is going to be all right."

I learned that He has power—that He was speaking the simple truth when He said: "All power is given unto me in Heaven and earth."

I felt His power that memorable night, as if a shock of electricity had been sent through my body.

I observed this interesting fact—He spoke to me in contemporary language, not using "thees" and "thous".

I learned that He knows all the details of our lives and of our household at any given moment of the day or night.

Another big thing I learned is that Christ does not want us to be sick, and that He has the power to make us well.

Why it is that we in the church have dropped His healing ministry, and why it is that so few people comparatively, are healed by Him today, is another story. But I know that He wants His healing to be a part of His present-day gospel, and that is something

that we need to study and ponder deeply.

I know that He is interested in and wants to help every day with every detail of our every-day lives. There is no problem too practical or too mundane about which to ask His help. He is eager to have us let Him into our work-a-day lives.

Not only is Christ interested in the details of our lives, and ready and willing to help, but I have learned that He will direct us every step of the way, provided we are willing. His guidance is a very real thing.

In previous years, I had wondered if it really was, and I had tried all the usual techniques with no real results and no sense of reality behind it. I was strongly suspicious that it was always just my mind working things out.

It was not until one August, six years ago, that Christ's guidance became a reality for me. It came as a result of the surrender of my will—when I finally came to the point where I could say with no reservations and mean it: "Yes, Lord, I mean to do whatever you tell me to do from here on out."

Then, it was as if a curtain, separating me from Christ, was drawn aside, or as if I stepped through a door into another room, where I was no longer separated from Him, and where I could be sure of what He wanted me to do or what He was saying to me with a new and sometimes startling clarity.

To use a very homely illustration, we had long known that our little boy badly needed more companionship with other children. Just before we left for Cape Cod that year, we had an opportunity to take a little second cousin, about his age, with us for the summer. But since laundry was quite a problem at Cape Cod, we didn't know how we could manage laundry for an extra child. Our directions were to take the cousin with us and to trust God about the laundry. We did just that, and one morning a few days after we had arrived, our neighbor across the street came over and asked us if we would be interested in using her washing machine and small ironer for the summer. Indeed we were interested! Upon checking with the family, we found that not a one of us had mentioned laundry to anyone up there. That is just one example, and again a very practical one.

I have found Christ the most loving and the most understanding Person imaginable. I used to think that He was concerned only with our soul's welfare and thus, had a Heavenly

viewpoint, which made Him unable to understand our peculiarly human problems. He is primarily concerned about our spiritual progress, of course, but He also has an earthly viewpoint and understanding. He understands every weakness, every quirk in our personalities. He understands our own individual problems.

Not long ago I came across this significant sentence in an old Quaker book: "Perfect obedience would be perfect happiness, if only we had perfect confidence in the power we were obeying." (1)

I have found that we can have confidence like that—perfect confidence in Christ. I have found Him completely trustworthy. Once we are really His, He never lets us go and He never lets us down.

He never fails us or forsakes us, and to reject Him or to ignore Him, or to refuse to admit Him into the smallest details of our lives is to refuse our own best interests—not just spiritually, but very practically as well.

I have not known Him long. I am only a beginner, but I know that I shall learn more as the days come and go, and meanwhile I am finding life shared with Him full of surprises, zest and adventure.

(1) *Smith, Hannah - The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life - Fleming H. Revell Co.*

An Easter Prayer

O God, Creator and Father of mankind, we thank Thee for the gift of faith, and for the confidence that vital trust in Thine eternal goodness creates in us the indestructible life. We rejoice that the grave is not the end but a gate to a wonderful adventure into the glorious unknown where the love that kept us here will keep us there. In death Thou dost lead us farther and farther into the heart of the total universe of reality where we shall continue to work together with Thee in the creation. We know that the quality of our lives here is the credential for our survival there. As Thy sons, as brothers in living faith, we will fear sin because sin separates us from Thee and hurts life and others. We will fear selfishness, greed, injustice, hate, cruelty, love of violence, sham, deceit. And saved by the healing of Thy Spirit and guided by Thee through all that our life shall face, we will spread the excellencies of Thy goodness throughout the world and join "the choir invisible" in singing of Thy glory for ever, O God of Majesty and Loving-kindness. Amen.

-- Roy Wallace Thomas.

A NEW CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

It is with pleasure that we present Alvin A. Jones of Hickory Grove, South Carolina as a contributing editor of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

Mr. Jones received his A.B. degree from Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania, as a member of Phi Beta Kappa, majoring in Greek; followed in 1930 by his B.D. degree from Duke University School of Theology.

He has served pastorates in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina and South Carolina, where he is located at present. Nature is his hobby.

He has written a book of poems on the trees of Eastern United States, and a book of children's sermons.

We welcome Mr. Jones to our staff of contributing editors.

APPRECIATION

Mere words fail to express fully our very deep appreciation of the loyalty of our contributing editors. We are also humbly grateful to all who have sent articles and other material. At this time we extend sincere thanks for—

The Vignettes	*By La Verne Moritz.*
"Flowers whisper—	*(Sent by Mrs. F. J. Lovejoy)*
THE SHEPHERD	*By Prof. A. E. Johnson.*
EASTER	*By Olin McKendree Jones, Ph. D.*
MEDITATION AS ONE OF THE HIGHWAYS TO GOD	*By Edward J. Allsop.*
GOD IS MY GUIDE	*(Sent by Rev. F. J. Compson)*
HE IS ALIVE	*By Catherine Marshall*
"Mortality"	*By William Hiram Foulkes, D.D.*

NOTICES and COMMENTS

EASTER IN APRIL. An April Easter seems especially blessed—the radiance of the lillies in the church, the glow of candles in the synagogue at Passover bring a spiritual joy to be reflected in the re-birth of Nature—spring and the crocus, pussywillows and behold the early robin! It is a joyous time, rich in hope, resplendent in the glory of resurrection.

LIBRARY NEWS. If you are seeking help through any difficulty or even just in daily living—or if you are trying to encourage and guide some friend into the light, you will welcome the series of inspired messages from the pen of Stella Terrill Mann.

Mrs. Mann speaks from a full heart with wisdom gained through personal application of the clear thought which she passes on to us in her books and lectures. Fellowship in Prayer appreciates Mrs. Mann's generous gift to its library and urges you to look into—

CHANGE YOUR LIFE THROUGH PRAYER - (price $2.00 - 150 pp. Dodd, Mead & Company, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.).

The book presents clearly and simply techniques of prayer. It gives the meaning of prayer and the author shows how to apply the principles involved by giving illustrations of problems that arise in everyday life.

CHANGE YOUR LIFE THROUGH FAITH AND WORK
CHANGE YOUR LIFE THROUGH LOVE
HOW TO USE THE POWER OF YOUR WORD

Following Stella Terrill Mann's thought and ideas surely strengthens our aim. "Prayer can change the world!"

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If your subscription has expired, may we look for your renewal right after Income Tax Due Date?

Renewals are the trunk which supports the branches and the still newer twigs of interest without which nothing grows—not even, FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER!

"Prayer, like seed, must accomplish
a change within before it can hope
to create a change without."

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oooOooo

"Mortality"

a Sonnet

Our life is crowned with dire mortality:
It is the fact which everyone must face;
It is fate's verdict on the human race.
Reason has taught us the futility
Of efforts to out-match reality
Encircled by the cords of time and space.
Swift-fleeting years will blot out every trace
Of our brief span, in deepest mystery.

Yet light breaks through the clouds at eventide,
For hope and faith proclaim, "We shall arise!"
Though death's bleak shadow we may not forfend,
Un-reason breaks and, deathless, there abide
The lights that shine above terrestrial skies.
Mortality—beginning, not life's end.

-- *William Hiram Foulkes.*

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From: